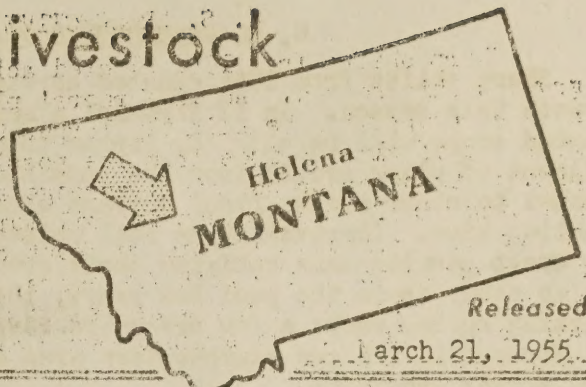


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Montana Crop and Livestock Reporting Service

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
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MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS



MONTANA PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS FOR 1955

Montana farmers have expressed their intentions to seed 5,002,000 acres to principal crops this spring. This acreage is 10 percent smaller than last year's seedings of 5,567,000 acres and 6.5 percent smaller than average of the preceding decade. The March 1 report shows a sharp reduction in spring wheat and flaxseed acreage which are only partially offset by heavier acreages of oats, barley and dry beans. The wheat allotment program is primarily responsible for the shift from wheat to heavier acreages of oats, barley and dry beans. Further shifts, if any, will be determined by weather conditions at seeding time, the survival of winter wheat and the availability of seed for planting Durum wheat.

Seed bed preparation, usually begun by this date, has been delayed by frozen soil and wet fields. Subsoil moisture reserves are generally average or better in the northern half of the State and in some southeastern sections but below average in southwestern and several south central areas. While topsoils are well saturated with moisture and will promote early growth, heavy spring rainfall will be needed in the drier sections to assure good crop prospects.

Wheat: Growers intentions indicate that 2,511,000 acres will be seeded to spring wheat, 21 percent less than last year's seedings of 3,179,000 acres. This acreage is 32 percent smaller than the 1944-53 average of 3,705,000 acres. Current estimates may not fully appraise the increased acreage allotments of Class 2 Durum wheat just recently granted Montana to increase production of this crop. Larger plantings are likely if Durum seed becomes available. The current spring wheat acreage added to the winter wheat estimate last fall of 1,699,000 acres totals 4,210,000 acres of all wheat. This acreage is 11 percent smaller than the gross seedings of 4,710,000 acres for the 1954 crop. The winter wheat seedings are still dormant, but most observers believe that the crop has escaped winter injury and survival will be good. Any acreage abandoned will most likely be reseeded to spring wheat.

Feed Grains: Another record breaking acreage of barley is indicated for 1955. Farmers intend to seed 1,505,000 acres which is 10 percent greater than last year's 1,368,000 acres and more than double average seedings of 710,000 acres. Oats seedings may be expanded 7 percent to 613,000 acres and 101,000 acres more than average. Prospective corn plantings of 201,000 acres are unchanged from 1954 but 8 percent above average. The aggregate of these feed crops totals 2,319,000 acres, compared with 2,142,000 acres in 1954.

Other Crops: The flaxseed acreage is greatly reduced from 160,000 acres last year to prospects of 86,000 acres in 1955, caused mainly from poor yields and failures a year ago. Sugar beets under acreage allotments indicate 52,000 acres will be planted against 55,500 in 1954. Potatoes and dry pea plantings of 10,000 and 4,000 acres respectively are unchanged from a year ago. The dry bean acreage of 20,000 will be a fourth larger than the 1954 crop. Farmers and ranchers intend to cut 2,509,000 acres of hay in 1955, 3 percent above the 2,436,000 acres harvested last year.

MONTANA: PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS FOR 1954

CROP	AVERAGE 1944-53			ACRES PLANTED		
	Acres	Yield per Pl. Acre		1954	Indicated 1955	1955 as % of 1954
	Planted	Amount	Unit			
	(1,000 Acres)			(1000 Acres)	(1000 Acres)	(Percent)
Corn	186	14.5	Bu.	201	201	100
Spring wheat ...	3,705	13.9	"	3,179	2,511	79
Oats	512	22.0	"	573	613	107
Barley	710	23.7	"	1,368	1,505	110
Flaxseed	126	6.4	"	160	86	54
Beans, dry	16	1,443	Lbs.	16	20	125
Peas, dry	15	1,177	"	4	4	100
Sugar beets	65.2	11.1	Tons	55.5	52	93
Potatoes	13.7	183	Bu.	10.0	10.0	100
All hay 1/.....	2,284	1.13	Tons	2,436	2,509	103

1/Data for hay relates to acres for harvest.

P. J. Greer, Agr. Statistician in Chg.
L. W. Wallin, Agr. Statistician
J. R. Price, Agr. Statistician

(Over)

U. S. PROSPECTIVE PLANTINGS, MARCH 1, 1955

Sharp shifts from 1954 planted acreages of several major crops will be made by growers this season. An if farmers' plans materialize, the total acreage of spring-planted crops will be slightly larger than last season. Much uncertainty about fulfillment of plans arises from the possible extent of winter wheat to be lost and replanted to other crops, final acreage allotments for some crops, and the weather at planting time. Improvement in soil moisture conditions in large areas during the last few weeks permits some optimism about crop prospects. While the season generally is not as early as in the past few years, there have as yet been no serious delays in starting spring work; a few areas are advanced. Shortages of irrigation water supplies and drought in a large southwestern area are the chief dark spots in the otherwise good spring prospects.

For the 16 crops covered in this report, a total of nearly 285½ million acres is indicated, 3.2 million more than were planted in 1954. Decreases of over a half-million acres of durum wheat, 1.4 million acres of other spring wheat, two-thirds of a million acres of rice, along with small decreases in flax, peanuts, tobacco, and sugar beets, are now in prospect. These would be more than offset by increases of 1¼ million acres each of barley and soybeans, 1.4 million acres of sorghums and smaller increases in corn, oats, potatoes, dry beans, and dry peas. Much of the overall difference results from an increase of 1.6 million acres in hay crops.

Spring work usually started by this date has been delayed slightly by snow, rain and wet fields in many areas. But the additional soil moisture was needed rather generally and has improved crop prospects. A warm, dry week in mid-March helped bring activities up-to-date. Topsoil moisture is generally adequate, except in a long-affected southwestern drought area. Subsoil reserves have improved, but are still below normal in a strip from southern Indiana westward across Missouri into the Plains States, also in southern Georgia and western Florida. Concern is felt over short irrigation water supplies in some central and most southern parts of the western mountain area.

C R O P	PLANTED ACREAGES			
	Average	1954	Indicated	1955 as pct.
	1944-53	1954	1955	of 1954
		Thousands		Percent
Corn, all	86,122	81,893	82,033	100.2
All spring wheat	20,481	15,887	13,960	87.9
Durum	2,657	1,658	1,112	67.1
Other spring	17,823	14,229	12,848	90.3
Oats	43,968	47,284	47,664	100.8
Barley	11,673	14,517	15,776	108.7
Flaxseed	4,069	5,959	5,743	96.4
Rice	1,785	2,462	1,800	73.1
Sorghums for all purposes	14,206	19,882	21,322	107.2
Potatoes	2,004	1,423	1,434	100.8
Sweetpotatoes	504	354	354	100.1
Tobacco 1/	1,734	1,645	1,561	94.9
Beans, dry edible	1,722	1,714	1,788	104.3
Peas, dry field	415	287	295	102.8
Soybeans 2/	13,740	18,753	19,981	106.5
Peanuts 2/	3,135	1,932	1,914	99.1
Hay 1/	74,328	72,770	74,360	102.2
Sugar Beets	813	963	833	86.5
1/Acreage harvested. 2/Grown alone for all purposes.				

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